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Commission on the Status of Women
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Item 3 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child

Statement submitted by Centre for Women, the Earth, the Divine, European Union of Women, Hadassah-Women's Zionist Organization of America, International Council of Jewish Women, International Council of Women, International Federation for Home Economics, International Federation of Business and Professional Women, National Council of German Women's Organizations, Pan Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association of Thailand, Salvation Army, Servas International, Socialist International Women, Soroptimist International, Third World Movement against the Exploitation of Women, Women's Federation for World Peace International, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

* E/CN.6/2007/1.

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Statement

We, the undersigned international and national non-governmental organisations in consultative status with ECOSOC, members of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women, present to the 51st session of CSW the following statement for information and consideration:

We urge governments to fulfil their commitment to International Conventions, treaties and agreements, by the development and implementation of appropriate laws that guarantee the protection of the girl child from abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect.

- Ensure that law enforcement has adequate resources and training to respond to violence against the girl child, to respond quickly to incidents of violence with compassion, understanding and respect; and to patrol of public places and streets;
- Provide timely and effective resources and appropriate support to victims of violence including safe shelter and free access to medical and psychological treatment;
- Introduce and enforce legislation making religious and traditional practices which harm girls illegal, including female genital mutilation, underage marriages and forced abortion;
- Severely penalise those who benefit from the sexual exploitation of the girl child, including prostitution, sex tourism, pornography, mail order brides and exploitation via the Internet.

We urge governments to do their utmost to secure the safety of the girl child from acts of violence and to give assistance to overcome the consequences when violence does occur, and to:

- Implement special services for the girl child who is a victim of any form of sexual exploitation;
- Create or strengthen the mechanisms for reporting acts of violence in a safe and confident environment;
- Provide effective witness protection;
- Support gender specific research into the causes and best practices in addressing violent behaviour; disseminate the results and act on the recommendations.

The member organisations of the Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women furthermore urge governments to

- Develop legislation and programmes aimed at the eradication of the exploitation of the girl child;
- Ensure access to education and sufficient nutrition for the girl child;
- Protect the girl child against physical, sexual or emotional abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation;
- Provide particular care for the girl child living on the streets, for refugees and victims of war.